ARC Meeting
San Diego, CA
October 9-11, 2018

Attending: Andy Condon (CT), Steve Duthie (MT), Rajani Edupalli (VA), Steve Hine (MN), Joe Jaehnke (WI), Nicole Kennedy (NC), Tim Kestern (VA), Barb Ledvina (IA/ARC), Bill McMahon (MN/CareerOneStop), John Pearce (OR), Mike Peery (MT), Dana Placzek (CT), Christopher Robison (NV), Amdanda Rohrer (MN/ARC), Gary Sincick (OR), Matt Steadman (UT/LEWIS), Jackie Summerton (WI), and Al Sylvestre (CT).

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Steve Hine welcomed everyone to San Diego. Introductions were made. Three new member were added to the group: Joe Jaehnke from Wisconsin, Matt Steadman the new LEWIS developer from Utah who has taken over the LEWIS project, and Mike Peery from Montana. It was noted that Carol Agee from Virginia will no longer be participating.

Workgroup membership was discussed and clarified.

Hine then reviewed the ARC budget and outstanding contracts. He informed the group that recent modifications that added a year and additional funds were made to contracts with UT (LEWIS), CT (Employer Database), and IA (ARC support). In addition, with Matt replacing Skyler Spainhower as LEWIS developer, a new contract was executed with NC for the purpose of retaining Tom Price as a technical resource for the next year.

Hine provided an update on the request to BLS to approve migrating LEWIS (and the necessary CIPSEA-protected respondent data) to an AWS cloud service database. Progress has been slow but BLS appears supportive of the proposal's intent. As they also recognize that this is potentially a precedent-setting decision, they want to make sure the decision is fully vetted and approved before moving forward.

Hine also informed the group that through meetings held earlier in the year, ETA has agreed that future procurement of the Employer Database can be accomplished through a GSA Schedule process. This eliminates the need for the ARC to undertake the lengthy RFP process, and the need to identify a state willing to be master contract holder and administrator and the risks that has entailed in previous years. ETA has stated they expect the process to be in place for the April 2019 deliverable, but the contract with CT will cover that should that not be the case.

Hine also informed the group that at the request of ETA and with some additional funding, MN hired a half-time analyst to conduct a project under Amanda Rohrer's direction to increase the timely collection and quality of the states' occupational licensing data.

The ARC received money for an occupational licensing project. A person was hired part-time to help execute changes to collecting. Amanda Rohrer gave an overview of the goals and objectives on the project:

1) Ensuring records are up to date
2) Reviewing contents of database for consistency, accuracy, and completeness
3) Better defining and documenting the concepts and process for data collectors
4) Collecting additional variables and verifying URLs as needed

Matt Steadman then provided an overview of the LEWIS efforts. He noted that UT has restructured the development team, returning Stacey Joos as direct supervisor and creating a team-based organization with him serving as LEWIS team lead.

Recent LEWIS improvements included updating to MySQL Version 8.0, and fixing flags on estimates that were falsely flagging certain projections results. Matt has also had conversations with BLS on MB3 estimation and Time Series estimation as initial steps to implement these in future versions of LEWIS. He expressed a need to keep updated on any announced schedule for deployment of these new methods.

Steadman mentioned that there have been numerous expressions of the need for training as a number of states have new analysts using LEWIS. After discussion of this, the group agreed that we would identify trainers and a locale for a training with the hopes that this could be offered early in 2019. Tim Kestner would check on the availability of the Richmond, VA computer lab used previously as a possible location. Steadman would contact Tom Price about possible trainers.

Steadman noted that if the cloud-based solution is approved, we would need to investigate how users are authenticated so that only authorized BLS agents would have access to confidential data. He also noted that Price has asked about the value to OES analysts of the Pennsylvania estimates review system and whether this should be incorporated into LEWIS. Andy Condon will start with OES PC state co-chair Mike Polzella as a source of information on this question.

Gary Sincick gave a presentation on Application Programming Interface (API) – how one program "talks" with another program.

- Advantages of a WID API include:
- Platform-neutral data access. ie. Pulling data from COS API's
- Makes data available outside the firewall
- Easier application development
- More portable applications
- Allows for easier integration of LMI into other products

How to publish APIs? SwaggerHub, Open API, AutoCoder. Other uses for APIs: loading data, serving graphs. Could this be added to an area of the ARC website – sandbox? Could we use SLACK or Basecamp to provide examples of APIs for others to use?

ARC members broke into the Policy, Education, and Structure for the remainder of the day.

Wednesday, October 10, 2018

Workgroups continued throughout the morning.

Amanda Rohrer provided an update on the ARC website. Traffic on the site is generally consistent. Monthly tables generate the most traffic.

Bill McMahon provided an update for CareerOneStop.

- They have been collecting all workforce database and program data, including WIOA providers and programs.
- Working on an occupational profiler API
- Continued work with the Skills Matcher
- Have introduced a Chatbot Assistant/Leveraging Microsoft AI
- Creating career videos, including ones with captions.
- Working with ETA to promote apprenticeships with their Apprenticeship.gov website

- Job Search – Labor Exchange, move to Job Bank?
- Use of Google for job search
- Creating CareerOneStop widgets

The remainder of the day was spent in workgroups.

Thursday, October 11, 2018

Structure – Dana Placzek reported on the work of the Structure Workgroup.

The release of version 2.8 will be delayed until license tables are done, but before the release of the next TEGL.

The Structure workgroup discussed adding features to the WID that would make it usable as a geodatabase. The plan is, however, that these additions will not be made until version 3.0 is released.

As a follow-up to Gary Sincick's presentation on APIs, the group discussed whether we want to pursue these ideas further, and the overwhelming response was yes. Hine asked who was willing to work and contribute to this, and volunteers included Gary Sincick (who also agreed to serve as chair), Bill McMahon, Amanda Rohrer, Steve Duthie, Joe Jaehnke, and Rajani Edupalli. The workgroup will begin by defining the scope of work and end goal of the project, including what functions should WID APIs perform. As Gary has started simple design work, efforts will build off this.

Education/Communication – Barb Ledvina reported on the work of the Education Workgroup. Topics for the next ARC newsletter were discussed along with possible authors. The goal is to get the newsletter out before the end of the year.

Plans are to include a way for people to sign up for the ARC newsletter on the ARC site.

Discussion was held on utilizing either Basecamp or SLACK for the dissemination of APIs and other information that may be helpful the DBAs. The group was leaning toward Basecamp.

The group discussed when additional training opportunities should be made available for DBAs. We had a great turnout for the training that was held in St. Paul in 2016. It was noted that much of the training that was presented at this training was incorporated into a training module that resides on the ARC website. The newsletter will a brief article that will let people know where to find the training. One issue that we had with the training in St. Paul was the vast difference in skills that students had. We had people that were new to the job as well as those with quite a few years of experience. When in face training is offered again we will need to provide it in levels (ie. beginner, advanced).

Policy – Steve Hine provided an update from the Policy Committee. Topics included the GSA scheduled contract for the Employer Database. They have come up with a lengthy set of recommendations for what the contract should and should not include. The ARC is hoping that they will be allowed to have some input into the process.

Making progress with BLS to migrate LEWIS to a cloud-based server. LEWIS will become web-based – which will be beneficial for states as they will no longer have to download software.

As noted earlier, a person was hired by Minnesota to work on the licensing program. The changes will result in the structure of the core tables for licensing.

Will work with Matt Steadman to come up with LEWIS training the first part of January 2019.

Don Haughton from ETA called into the meeting, and was provided an update from the group.

Steve will work on setting up the next meeting for March or April of 2019 near or in Washington, DC.